

LARS-Latin American Remote Sensing Conference



ISPRS is increasing its involvement in Latin America. Our Regional Member SELPER (The Latin American Society of Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Systems) has always been active and this year Treasurer Mike Renslow attended the SELPER Symposium and General Assembly in Guanajuato, Mexico. Myriam Ardila, the ISPRS Regional Representative in Latin America is active in promoting ISPRS in the Region. The highlight activity in 2010 was LARS - the Latin American Remote Sensing Conference held in Santiago de Chile, 4 – 8 October. This was the first event of its kind and was organised by the Chilean Servicio Aerofotogramétrico (SAF) with a view to this being the first of a series of conferences modelled on the Photogrammetric Week held in Stuttgart every two years. ISPRS assisted with the organisation of the conference and LARS was designated an ISPRS Regional Conference, SELPER was represented on the organising committee. The format of the meeting was workshops on the first day and the following three days comprised plenary sessions, technical demonstrations and technical sessions made up of submitted papers. SAF organised a visit to Easter Island (Isla da Pascua) on Friday and Saturday, which included a presentation to the island authorities of a digital map of the island created by SAF, but which also included tours of the island.

The plenary sessions concentrated on the broad issues of international and regional developments and included presentations on environmental issues including disaster management, stressing the need for international co-ordination and integration of data. Speakers from ESRI, CNES and INPE spoke about their regional activities. The plenary sessions gave a good overview of international activities but left some gaps in what is happening in Latin America; there was good discussion after

the presentations, indicating a lively interest in developing remote sensing techniques in Latin America.

Two workshops were conducted: The first organised by ISPRS, IEEE and OGC, was one of the GEOSS workshops promoting GEOSS and the GEOSS architecture, on the theme of forestry and bio energy. The other was on polarimetric SAR, organised by IEEE. Both were well attended and indicate a strong interest in developing these technical subjects in Chile.

The technical sessions were somewhat mixed but with a good number of papers on remote sensing in Latin America. The Technology Demonstrations gave a platform to local and international companies to demonstrate their latest development. There was also an exhibition of 19 companies and organisations, including many from Chile, giving a good impression of activity in the host country.

This meeting was a good start to a series of Latin American conferences. There is a need to make the event more inclusive of Latin American countries other than Chile, and to establish it as *the* conference for Latin America, close collaboration with SELPER will help this, and ISPRS can contribute to making this happen by involving industry and other countries in the planning and execution of the meeting.

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